8/33.b.10

REMARKS

UPON THE LATE

RESOLUTIONS

OF THE

Houſe of Commons,

RESPECTING THE

Propoſed Change of the POOR LAWS.

TO WHICH ARE SUBJOINED,

Some GENERAL OBSERVATIONS upon the PRINTED BILL.

By HENRY ZOUCH, Clerk, a Juſtice of the Peace.

L E E D S:

Printed by G. WRIGHT; and ſold by all the BOOKSELLERS in TOWN and COUNTRY.

1796

BRITISH MUSEUM

To the Gentlemen aſſembled at WAKEFIELD, on JANUARY 29th, 1776, in order to take into Conſideration the late *Reſolutions of the Houſe of Commons*, reſpecting the propoſed Change in the Poor Laws.

GENTLEMEN,

THE very honourable teſtimony You have been pleaſed to give me of Your regard, by Your publick approbation of the Remarks upon the Reſolutions of the Houſe of Commons, *and the requeſt you made to have them re-printed, (together with the* Reſolutions *themſelves,) demands my warmeſt acknowledgements.*

I am happy to find that theſe Remarks *(tho' haſtily put together,) have anſwered one uſeful purpoſe, at leaſt, in that they have prompted many Gentlemen of worth and ability, to pay great attention to this very intereſting ſubject.*

The good ſenſe and unanimity which prevailed at the Meeting, *rendered any thing that I could ſay upon the occaſion, unneceſſary.*

A Bill *hath been printed ſince the publication of the* Remarks, *and I am now tempted, by the indulgence I have already met with, to ſubjoin ſome Obſervations upon it.*

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your moſt obedient,

and humble Servant,

H. ZOUCH.

SANDAL, *January* 31, 1776.

REMARKS

Upon the RESOLUTIONS of the HOUSE OF COMMONS, &c.

RESOLUTION I.

"THAT it is the opinion of this Committee, That the laws relating to the poor, in "that part of Great Britain called England, "are defective, and the good purpoſes in- "tended by them in many reſpects prevented.

Remark.] That the laws relating to the poor of this Kingdom are ineffectual to *every* good purpoſe, that could be wiſhed, is an allowed truth, but then theſe laws are of ſo mixed and ſo complicated a nature, and the objects of them make up ſo conſiderable a part of the body of the people; and beſides, ſuch is the dearneſs of all the neceſſaries of life, ſuch is the encreaſing luxury of the times, and the prevailing ſpirit of liberty, it is to be feared that the *propoſed*, and indeed perhaps any other material alteration of theſe laws, may be productive of greater miſchiefs than it is deſigned to remove.

RESO-

" RESOLUTION 2. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That the preſent method of re- " gulating ſuch poor, in ſeparate pariſhes and " townſhips, is in general ineffectual for their " proper relief and employment.

Remark.] In ſmall Pariſhes or Townſhips, workhouſes are rarely found to be neceſſary, or uſeful: the poor are kept at a leſs expence at their own homes, where they are better reconciled to their condition, and perhaps are of more benefit to the community at large. In this ſituation too they receive occaſional comfort by public doles or charities, and if they are honeſt and induſtrious, they ſeldom fail of meeting with ſome little aſſiſtance from their well-diſpoſed neighbours.

" RESOLUTION 3. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That the money raiſed for the " relief of the poor is a grievous, and, if no " new regulations are made, will be an increaſ- " ing burden upon the public.

Remark.] It is certain that very large ſums are annually expended in the relief of the poor, but is it equally certain that this ariſes ſo much from a *defect* in the laws now in being as from a want of a proper and judicious *exertion* of them? This, however may be in general obſerved, that the money which is now raiſed for the maintenance of the poor is circulated in the places to which they

they belong, or in which they reſide, and the inhabitants reap the advantage thereby.

The ſupport of every government by taxes, &c. may be deemed a *grievous*, and perhaps *an encreaſing burthen*; but then the neceſſities of the common-weal muſt be conſulted.

" RESOLUTION 4. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That a conſiderable part of ſuch " money is expended in ſupporting litigations " concerning ſettlements.

Remark.] When it is here aſſerted, that a *conſiderable* part of the money raiſed for the relief of the poor is expended *in ſupporting litigations concerning ſettlements*, ſome facts were ſurely ſtated as a ground for the Committee to form ſuch a reſolution as this; but it might not be a difficult matter to ſhew, that ſuch a ſum of money is *not* ſo expended as to render the interpoſition of the legiſlature on *this account*, at all neceſſary, and eſpecially when it is to bring about a fundamental change in the preſent ſyſtem of our poor laws—laws confirmed by long experience, and eſtabliſhed by undoubted precedents.

Appeals to the Court of *King's Bench* will be found not to be ſo frequent, or ſo very formidable in their conſequences as we are taught to believe, for whoever will be at the trouble of looking into that moſt valuable book,

book, Sir James Burrow's "*Series of the deciſions of the Court of King's Bench upon Settlement Caſes*," will find that no more than 221 queſtions of this kind, were agitated in that Court, within the ſpace of 40 years; that is, about five caſes, one year with another, throughout *England* and *Wales*. To think of calculating what ſum might be annually ſaved by each townſhip in the Kingdom, even granting that the new law would actually annul every application in future to the above Court, muſt be allowed to be a ridiculous attempt, the ſum would amount to ſo trifling a matter.

Appeals to the Courts of *Quarter Seſſions* are certainly attended with expence, but not ſuch as to create any great alarm, for the doctrine of ſettlements, being now ſo clearly explained and ſo generally underſtood, theſe appeals are principally inſtituted for the purpoſe of trying and adjudging *facts*, and not the legal *merits* of the queſtion. However, if it was a matter of any great moment, the number of ſuch appeals might be exactly aſcertained, by having recourſe to the ſeveral Records belonging to theſe Courts of *Quarter Seſſions* in every part of the Kingdom. A Juſtice of the Peace for the County of *Lancaſter*, ſometime ago informed me, that he believed, (for he could not then ſpeak poſitively about the matter) that large County would

would not, *communibus annis*, produce many more than twenty appeals in a year, and it is queſtionable whether there are more than double that number in the whole *Weſt Riding of Yorkſhire*, in the ſame ſpace of time; hence then, from an application of this eſtimate to the reſt of the Kingdom, it may be aſked, Where is the mighty public grievance? Is it ſuch a one as to have any weight to induce the Parliament of England to attempt ſo eſſential a change in the law as is in contemplation at this time? But after all, if Pariſhes will ignorantly or wilfully ſtir up or defend improper ſuits, it is at their own peril, they only are for the moſt part the ſufferers, and the public in general have little to do with it.

" Resolution 5. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That the employing of the in- " fant and able poor, in ſuch works as may be " ſuited to their ſtrength and capacity, will be " very beneficial to this kingdom.

Remark.] Was there no proviſion under the *preſent* laws for the infant poor, the propriety of this reſolution would be indiſputable. What great good can poſſibly accrue to the publick from the labour of children under ſeven years of age? What employment can be adapted to the ſtrength and capacity of ſuch tender years? And when they actually do arrive at the full age of ſeven

years, the power that is already lodged in churchwardens and overſeers of the poor, with the conſent of two juſtices of the peace of apprenticing ſuch poor children, is ſurely the beſt means of providing for them. The inhabitants are the moſt competent judges, and it is their intereſt to diſpoſe of theſe children in a proper manner, and to ſee they are inſtructed and maintained in their ſervice. There are beſides in many pariſhes, charitable bequeſts, and donations, ſecured under proper guardians and truſtees, for the ſpecial purpoſes of cloathing, or educating poor children, or binding them as apprentices, to huſbandmen, artificers, manufacturers, and ſuch like.

" RESOLUTION 6. That it is the opinion of this
" Committee, That if the diſputes about ſettle-
" ments, and removals of the poor between one
" pariſh or place and another in the ſame coun-
" ty could be prevented; the great expence
" attending ſuch litigations would be ſaved;
" the poor would have an eaſier acceſs to places
" where they might find employment, and
" would avoid the cruel and ſevere treatment
" which they frequently receive from the con-
" tending pariſhes during ſuch conteſt.

Remark.] It is an inconteſtable truth, that if diſputes about ſettlements and removals of the poor *could* be prevented, the expence attending ſuch litigations *would* be ſaved; but he muſt be poſſeſſed of an uncommon

mon degree of foreſight and diſcernment, who can undertake to demonſtrate that the intended law will have this effect. Yet if this ſhould really be the caſe, will it not be likely to produce a variety of other diſputes, of a more expenſive and troubleſome nature?

The latter part of this reſolution ſeems to throw an oblique reflection upon the tendency of the certificate act, and to intimate that the propoſed law would be in part a tacit repeal of that act. But however, ſome gentlemen may wiſh to have this law expunged from the ſtatute-book, there are others, who with equal confidence, maintain it to be founded in great wiſdom, and to be generally advantageous, as well to the publick as to the poor themſelves. But, if upon an application made to two juſtices of the peace by any perſon to whom a certificate was refuſed, ſuch juſtices ſhould be empowered to ſummon pariſh officers, and upon hearing both parties to order ſuch certificate to be granted, or not, as they ſaw moſt convenient, the main objections made to this act might be removed.

" Resolution 7. That it is the opinion of this
" Committee, That if the poor were to be
" maintained and employed at one general
" county expence, thoſe diſputes would in a
" great meaſure be avoided; the ſpirit and in-
" tention of the ſtatute made in the 43d year of

" the reign of Queen Elizabeth would be pro-
" moted; and the regulations and proviſions
" therein contained better enforced.

" RESOLUTION 8. That it is the opinion of this
" Committee, That the eſtabliſhing proper
" houſes and buildings at ſuch places in each
" county, as ſhall be beſt ſituated for the re-
" ception, accommodation, and employment of
" the ſeveral poor perſons proper to be ſent
" thither; and for the convenience of their
" being duly inſpected and attended to, will
" be the moſt eaſy and effectual method for
" relieving the impotent, and employing the
" able poor.

Remark.] In conſequence of the former reſolutions, we here ſee the general ſenſe of the committee, namely, That the eſtabliſhing of *county workhouſes* will be the moſt eaſy and effectual method of maintaining and employing the poor. This then is the important queſtion, a queſtion of ſuch compaſs and conſequence, that it requires the moſt ſerious and attentive conſideration. Whatever may be ſuppoſed to be the ſpirit and intention of the 43d of *Queen Elizabeth*, there ſeems to be no neceſſity to have a retroſpect to that ſtatute, it will be ſufficient if we obſerve upon the ſubſequent reſolutions as they ariſe in their order before us.

" RESOLUTION 9. That it is the opinion of this
" Committee, That care ſhould be taken in
" the providing and eſtabliſhing of ſuch houſes

" and

" and buildings, for properly claſſing and em-
" ploying the ſeveral perſons admitted therein;
" for which purpoſe, and in order to the eſta-
" bliſhing a ſyſtem of good regulations, it may
" be proper to inſpect the ſeveral bye-laws,
" rules, regulations, and ordinances, conſti-
" tuted in the ſeveral houſes of induſtry and
" public workhouſes, eſtabliſhed under ſpecial
" acts of parliament, within this kingdom.

Remark.] In the eſtabliſhment of a great national police as this may be called, every nerve of government ſhould be exerted to render it as complete as poſſible, and for this end it is highly proper to enquire into the conſtitution, &c. of the publick workhouſes herein ſpecified: and beſides, another great purpoſe may be anſwered, that if a minute and ſpirited enquiry is ſet on foot, a detection and redreſs of any abuſes that may have crept into theſe houſes, will probably take place.

" RESOLUTION 10. That it is the opinion of this
" Committee, That for the better government
" of the ſaid houſes, and carrying the intended
" regulations into execution, every perſon hav-
" ing an eſtate of 100*l. per annum* in England,
" and 60*l. per annum* in Wales, ſhall be a go-
" vernor of the poor for the county wherein he
" reſides, provided ſuch eſtate, or one half
" thereof, ſhall lie in ſuch county; and that
" there ſhall be one general meeting of the go-
" vernors for ſuch county, on a day and place

" to

" to be fixed; at which meeting they ſhall de-
" termine the places where the buildings, be-
" fore deſcribed, ſhall be erected, and alſo what
" pariſhes ſhall return their rates and accounts,
" and have their correſpondence and tranſacti-
" ons with each of ſuch houſes, according to
" their ſituation and vicinity, as near as con-
" niently may be; which houſes and pariſhes
" ſhall be diſtinguiſhed by the name of the
" Firſt, Second, *&c.* Diſtrict: and that there
" ſhall be one annual general meeting of the
" governors at each of the ſaid houſes, on ſome
" certain day to be fixed; and alſo one monthly
" meeting of the ſaid governors, at the ſame
" place, in the firſt week in every month, on a
" certain day to be appointed by them: and
" that ſuch governors may at their annual
" meeting elect from time to time ſuch other
" perſons, reſiding in ſuch county, and having
" eſtates of ſuch value, in the dominions of
" Great Britain, as they ſhall think fit, to be
" governors; provided the numbers ſo elected
' ſhall not exceed at any one time a certain
" number to be limited for each county, which
" number ſhall at ſuch firſt general meeting of
" the governors at large, be diſtributed between
" the ſeveral houſes then to be fixed upon, as
" they ſhall think fit, and election made ac-
" cordingly.

Remark.] It is very proper, that thoſe who contribute moſt to the ſupport of the poor, ſhould be the perſons who have the beſt right to be truſted with the execution of the new law; but if every man of 100l. per

per ann. ſhall think proper to attend the general meetings, and eſpecially upon the commencement of this law (and ſurely ſuch attendance will at that time be altogether neceſſary) we may eaſily figure to ourſelves the difficulty, if not the impoſſibility of having buſineſs properly diſpatched, in ſo confuſed a throng: * would it not therefore be adviſable, that a committee of gentlemen of known abilities, integrity and ſpirit, ſhould at the firſt meeting, be elected for the purpoſe of maturely conſidering a buſineſs of ſuch prodigious moment? and then might it not be proper to report their opinions to the general aſſembly, at a convenient time, who will be at liberty to take their meaſures accordingly? But here another difficulty will naturally ariſe, where will a committee of gentlemen be found *willing* (for ſurely in a matter of this ſort, no good effect can poſſibly follow to *oblige* gentlemen) to undertake the arduous taſk? To form, digeſt and execute the very ground-work of this buſineſs, muſt be the reſult of infinite labour and expence of time and thought.

But if it ſhould happen that this mode of providing for the poor by its novelty, or apparent publick good, may induce gentlemen to engage warmly in it's ſupport; yet, thoſe who have paid the leaſt attention to the event of

* This, and a few other objections (of no very great conſequence indeed) appear to be removed in the Bill.

of many publick inſtitutions, will find ſome reaſon to believe, that *county workhouſes*, tho' eſtabliſhed under the higheſt authority, and guarded by the ſtrongeſt fences, will be likely in the end, either to ſink into utter neglect, or to fall into the hands of jobbers and contractors, who alone will profit at the publick expence.

When the *Foundling Hoſpital* was firſt ſet on foot, it met with the countenance and protection of all ranks of people; the pulpit ſounded its encomium, and the preſs was employed in holding forth its utility throughout the land; it was nurſed with the ſmiles of royal favour, whilſt the publick treaſure of the kingdom was laviſhed in its ſupport; but alas! it hath had its day!

The Hoſpital at *Ackworth* in *Yorkſhire*, would very probably have been diſſolved before its time, had it not been for the zeal and benevolence of ſome neighbouring gentlemen, who were its original ſupporters; for at laſt it became difficult to procure the attendance of truſtees, even to paſs the very accounts. And if this was the caſe with a charitable foundation, where the objects of it, being helpleſs innocents, very little trouble or attention on the part of the truſtees was required, what may be expected to be the fate of an undertaking of ſo complex a nature as the conduct of theſe county workhouſes

houſes muſt neceſſarily be? For who are to be the occupiers of theſe houſes? Perſons of all ages, ſexes, conſtitutions and climates: the old and the young, the blind and the decrepid, ideots and lunaticks, the diſſolute and the diſtempered poor. But if the eyes of the governors ſhould be thought leſs neceſſary to be directed to the *internal* œconomy of the houſe, it muſt be allowed that there will be ſufficient employment from *without*. To regulate, to raiſe, and collect the aſſeſſments, the conſtant trouble of liquidating the charge of maintaining the caſual poor, to controll the authority that is to be given to the guardians, to reconcile the contrary and claſhing intereſts and opinions of guardians and overſeers; and moſt of all, the infliction of penalties and puniſhments, upon *governors*, guardians, overſeers, &c. for neglect of duty; all theſe will be found matters of perpetual and perplexing difficulty; and tho' governors ſhould be armed with the full powers of the magiſtrate, and with every inclination to do their duty, and a perfect knowledge of it; yet they are not bound to poſſeſs the patience and perſeverance of philoſophy: nor can it be expected their whole leiſure ſhould be given up to a buſineſs of this kind.

" Resolution 11. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That the governors ſhall at their

" annual meeting appoint ſo many perſons to
" be guardians of the poor, for the ſeveral pa-
" riſhes, townſhips, and places, belonging to
" each houſe, as they ſhall think fit, having
" eſtates of 25*l. per annum*, or occupying lands,
" *&c.* of 50*l. per annum*, within ſuch county;
" but no perſon ſhall act as guardian within any
" pariſh, townſhip, or place, whilſt he ſhall be
" churchwarden or overſeer of the poor for the
" ſame.

Remark.] By this reſolution we perceive that a new ſet of officers are to be appointed, called *guardians of the poor*: but can theſe be conſidered in any other light than as an additional number of *overſeers* for every townſhip? who will be more likely to clog and confound every buſineſs, than in any way to contribute to its perfection or improvement.

" Resolution 12. That it is the opinion of this
" Committee, That there ſhall be a treaſurer
" and clerk, and alſo a maſter and matron,
" appointed by the ſaid governors for each of
" the ſaid houſes, at the Firſt meeting of the
" governors after the ſaid houſes ſhall be fit for
" the reception of the poor, and proper ſalaries
" allowed to each of them.

Remark.] A treaſurer and clerk, a maſter and matron, muſt of conſequence be appointed to ſuperintend and regulate every family, which is to conſiſt of ſo promiſcuous a multitude; but at the ſame time it ought not to be forgotten, to make very ample proviſion for

for apothecaries, ſurgeons, ſchoolmaſters, nurſes and attendants of all kinds, nor ſhould any one of theſe houſes be unprovided with a chaplain, (if indeed ſuch a one can be found, who will content himſelf with being daily converſant with ſuch a variety of wretchedneſs,) as the unhappy tenants will aſſuredly want every ſupply of ſpiritual conſolation; and it cannot be reaſonably expected that the miniſters of the ſeveral pariſhes where ſuch workhouſes may happen to be placed, ſhould have this charge thrown upon them.

" RESOLUTION 13. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That the poor perſons being " lame, impotent, old, or blind, who are una- " ble to work, or who cannot maintain them- " ſelves by their labour, but ſtand in need of " relief, ſhall be ſent from the reſpective pa- " riſhes and places where they reſide, to the " ſaid houſes, and there accommodated with " every thing ſuited to their ſeveral neceſſities " and occaſions; and ſuch of them who ſhall " be able to work, employed in labour ſuited " to their ſtrength and capacity.

Remark.] The condition of the poor perſons mentioned in this reſolution is of itſelf truly deplorable: unhappy generally are ſuch, to be taken from their *own homes*, and placed in workhouſes even in their *own* pariſhes, where yet probably they may have ſome few friends, or little connections; but to be hurried away to a conſiderable diſtance,

to be doomed for ever to aſſociate with ſtrangers, and thoſe the moſt miſerable of their fellow-creatures, beings for the moſt part of diſtempered bodies, and too often ferocious minds; a company, whoſe calamities muſt neceſſarily be multiplied and enhanced by their mutual ſufferings and complaints; the idea is too melancholy to dwell upon! the mind recoils at it, and the imagination is ſubdued!

But the opinion of that very eminent perſon, *Judge Blackſtone*, will ſtand in the place of a thouſand arguments, where ſpeaking of the practice of accumulating the poor in one common workhouſe (and by this he alludes only to parochial workhouſes, which ſurely are much leſs liable to theſe objections than county workhouſes) he ſaith "*It tends to deſtroy all domeſtic connections, (the only felicity of the honeſt and induſtrious labourer) and to put the ſober and diligent upon a level in point of their earnings, with thoſe who are diſſolute and idle.*

"RESOLUTION 14. That it is the opinion of this "Committee, That the orderly and induſtrious "poor, who, from accidental ſickneſs, infir- "mities, or other unavoidable cauſes, ſhall be "rendered unable to maintain themſelves and "their families by their labour, may have tem- "porary relief from the overſeers of the poor "within the ſeveral pariſhes or places where "ſuch

" ſuch poor reſide, with the approbation of
" Two or more of the ſaid guardians, in ſuch
" manner as ſhall be moſt ſuitable to their ne-
" ceſſities.

Remark.] It ſeems by this reſolution, that there is to be a power lodged ſolely in two guardians, of determining who are proper objects to be maintained as *caſually neceſſitous*, and to receive *temporary relief*, in their own pariſhes, but when it is notorious, that pariſh officers (and really how can theſe ſort of guardians be conſidered as any thing more ?) are frequently actuated by pique or prejudice ; that they are either inattentive to, or ignorant of their duty, or perhaps ſomething worſe ; will it be prudent to repoſe ſo great a confidence in men of this complexion ? and it may happen, that when a perſon ſhall in their eſtimation be found guilty of poverty, he will be fortunate enough, if he eſcapes being immured in a workhouſe for life. The poor at preſent are in good hands; juſtices of the peace are their proper guardians and protectors ; and I am bold enough to ſay, that the magiſtrates of this country (nor ought it to be ſuppoſed that they are different in any other) will be always found acting upon diſintereſted and liberal principles; they will be found neither afraid nor aſhamed to do their duty, (and eſpecially in the execution of the poor laws) with

with an humanity, diſpatch and firmneſs, becoming the miniſters of juſtice.

" RESOLUTION 15. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That ſuch of the infant poor " under the age of four years, who have loſt " their parents, or whoſe parents are unable to " maintain them, and ſhall be willing to part " with them, may, by the direction of Two or " more of the ſaid guardians, be put out to " nurſe in that or ſome neighbouring pariſh, " until they ſhall be fit to receive inſtruction; " and from that time, ſhall be ſent to the houſe " to which ſuch pariſh or place ſhall belong, to " be inſtructed in all neceſſary duties, and em- " ployed in ſuch manner as ſhall be moſt ſuit- " able to their age and capacities.

" RESOLUTION 16. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That ſuch of the infant poor " above the age of four years, who have loſt " their parents, or whoſe parents are unable to " maintain them, may, by the direction of Two " or more of the ſaid guardians, be ſent to the " houſe to which ſuch pariſh or place ſhall be- " long, to be inſtructed in all neceſſary duties, " and employed as aforeſaid.

" RESOLUTION 17. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That each of ſuch children re- ſpectively, when of proper age to be placed " out apprentice, or to ſervice, ſhall be ſo " placed out by the governors; but if at any " time their parents ſhall apply to the gover- " nors to have their children returned, before " ſo placed out, and it ſhall be made appear to

" ſuch

" ſuch governors that the parents are able to
" maintain them, the governors ſhall order
" them to be returned.

Remark.] What was remarked under the Fifth Reſolution, will in a great meaſure be applicable to theſe; however, I beg to obſerve here, that although the Governours of the *Hoſpital at Ackworth* took every neceſſary precaution, to diſpoſe of the children, as apprentices to proper perſons, yet it was impoſſible for them to do it: they had the mortification to ſee a great number of theſe unhappy objects, again, literally, *expoſed and deſerted.*

" RESOLUTION 18. That it is the opinion of this
" Committee, That the overſeers of the poor
" ſhall, in the laſt week in every month, ſend
" to the treaſurer of the houſe to which their
" pariſh or place belongs, according to the re-
" gulations aforeſaid, a true account of all
" the expences incurred relative to the poor,
" within ſuch pariſh or place, for the four
" weeks next preceding the week in which ſuch
" accounts ſhall be ſent, after the ſame reſpec-
" tively ſhall have been produced to two or
" more of the ſaid guardians, and allowed by
" them.

Remark.] Here then we find, that the authority which is now properly given to Juſtices of the Peace, of allowing the accounts of Overſeers, is to be transferred to *two Guardians*, who from the reaſons ſtated under

under R. 14. muſt be held to be very incompetent judges of the matter.

" RESOLUTION 19. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That the treaſurer and clerk " ſhall make an account of all receipts and " payments within each month, to be laid be- " fore the governors, at their monthly meetings, " and ſhall alſo make and lay before the gover- " nors, at ſuch meetings, abſtracts of the ex- " pences incurred within the ſeveral pariſhes, " by ſuch relief or proviſions aforeſaid, point- " ing out the particular object of ſuch expen- " ces, for the better obſervation and conſidera- " tion of ſuch governors.

Remark.] If the preceding Reſolutions are paſſed into a law, the buſineſs here alluded to will follow of courſe.

" RESOLUTION 20. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That the governors, at their " monthly meetings, ſhall inſpect and examine " all ſuch accounts; and if they find cauſe to " ſuſpect that there has been miſmanagement, " or any improper behaviour therein, they may " order the perſons concerned in ſuch tranſacti- " ons to appear before them at their next " monthly meeting, provided the place where " ſuch matter ariſes ſhall not be more than ten " miles from ſuch houſe, and then and there " inquire into the ſame upon oath, and make " ſuch order and regulation therein as to them " ſhall appear juſt and reaſonable: If the place " ſhall exceed that diſtance, the ſaid governors " may grant an order for the perſons ſo con-

" cerned

" cerned to attend ſome neighbouring juſtice
" of the peace, at ſuch time and place as he
" ſhall appoint, which ſhall be notified to the
" perſons ſo concerned; and ſuch juſtice ſhall,
" in like manner, inquire into the ſame, and
" make ſuch order and regulation therein as
" to him ſhall ſeem fit.

Remark.] If it be thought requiſite to inveſt the Governours with the authority of Juſtices of the Peace, there ſurely ought to be a reſervation of an appeal elſewhere.

" RESOLUTION 21. That it is the opinion of this
" Committee, That for carrying the ſeveral
" purpoſes aforeſaid into execution, aſſeſſments
" ſhall be made, by order of the juſtices at
" their general quarter ſeſſions of the peace,
" upon every pariſh, townſhip, and place,
" within each county, according to the pro-
" portion of money raiſed within ſuch pariſhes,
" and places reſpectively, and applied on ac-
" count of the poor, upon a medium of the
" ſeven preceding years; the mode of aſcer-
" taining the ſums ſo raiſed to be particularly
" directed.

Remark.] As we are not inſtructed in what manner this application for aſſeſſments is to be made to the Courts of Quarter Seſſions, whether by the Governours, or by the reſpective Pariſhes, one cannot form any clear judgment of the propriety, or neceſſity of this application: the preſent mode of

procuring aſſeſſments ſeems to be adequate to every neceſſary purpoſe. This however is certain, that the method of keeping accounts and of laying aſſeſſments in many country pariſhes, is ſo very inaccurate and perplexed, and, to obſerve nothing of the frauds, or concealments that may poſſibly ariſe in ſtating the real *quantum* of ſuch aſſeſſments for the *laſt ſeven years*, it will hardly be in the power of Juſtices of the Peace, at any quarter ſeſſions to diſpatch this ſingle buſineſs with any ſatisfaction; but moſt of all will every pariſh think themſelves concerned to take ſpecial care, that the bench may be fully informed of the true ſtate of their rates, yet ſo far only perhaps as may be neceſſary to exonerate themſelves, and how can this be poſſibly effected but by the mediation of Counſel learned in the law? and as one ground of the repeal of the preſent poor laws is for the good purpoſe of preventing expenſive litigations, will not the frequent applications to the ſeſſions that are required in this buſineſs of the aſſeſſments only, be likely to draw an expence upon pariſhes, much more than enough to counter-balance every other that can poſſibly ariſe, from ſuits reſpecting ſettlements?

" Resolution 22. That it is the opinion of this
" Committee, That the accounts from each of

" ſuch

" ſuch houſes ſhall be made up quarterly, and
" laid before the juſtices of the peace for the
" county wherein ſuch houſes are ſituate, at
" their general quarter ſeſſions of the peace;
" who ſhall inſpect the ſame, and make orders
" for the ſums to be raiſed within the ſucceed-
" ing quarter.

Remark.] It is not eaſy to conceive what end can be anſwered by giving the Juſtices at the ſeſſions a power to *inſpect* the quarterly accounts: the Governours are the only competent judges of them. The production of theſe accounts here, cannot ſurely be meant for the purpoſe of having them recorded in the rolls of the ſeſſions.

" RESOLUTION 23. That it is the opinion of this
" Committee, That no pariſh, townſhip, or
" place, ſhall be compelled to contribute more
" in any one year than ſuch average ſum.

Remark.] Let us *ſuppoſe*, and the *ſuppoſition* ſeems not to be an unfair one, that ſuch average ſum ſhould not prove to be *equal* to the neceſſary expences; how is the reſidue to be raiſed? by public benefactions, or parliamentary aids?

And here it may not be impertinent to aſk another queſtion, whether the *caſual* poor are to be ſupported out of the average ſum hereby ſpecified, or by a diſtinct rate within each pariſh?

" RESOLUTION 24. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That if it ſhall be made appear " to the juſtices, at their court of general quar- " ter ſeſſions of the peace, that a reduction " may be made in the ſaid ſeveral aſſeſſments, " and that ſuch average ſum for any pariſh, " townſhip, or place, exceeds four ſhillings in " the pound of the annual value of the lands, " tenements, and hereditaments, within ſuch " pariſh, townſhip, or place, upon a fair valua- " tion thereof, made by perſons to be appointed " by ſuch juſtices, at the expence of ſuch pa- " riſh, townſhip, or place, then and in that " caſe ſuch court of quarter ſeſſions ſhall, in " all their orders for future aſſeſſments, conſi- " der the average ſum for ſuch pariſh, town- " ſhip, or place, at one fifth part of the annual " value of ſuch lands, tenements, and heredita- " ments, ſo to be aſcertained as aforeſaid, in- " ſtead of the average ſum ſo firſt ſettled.

Remark.] It is hardly probable that there is any pariſh where the average ſum will be likely to exceed four ſhillings in the pound, of the annual *bonâ fide* value, of the eſtates there; but if this is a fact, it ſeems reaſonable that ſuch pariſh ſhould be eaſed in ſome way or another: and indeed as the charge of maintaining the poor is now wholly thrown upon the *landed property*, would it be unjuſt to expect, whenever a reviſion of the poor laws may happen to take place, that the *perſonal eſtates* ſhould be made aſſeſſable to this neceſſary ſupport of the ſubject?

RESO-

" RESOLUTION 25. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That each riding in the county " of York, and diviſion in the county of Lin- " coln, and each diſtrict, city, town, or place, " where more pariſhes than one are incorpo- " rated for the relief of the poor, by ſpecial " acts of parliament, ſhall, with reſpect to all " the purpoſes of theſe intended regulations, " be conſidered as diſtinct counties.

Remark.] This needs no comment.

" RESOLUTION 26. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That theſe regulations ſhall not " take effect in any county, until ordered by " two parts in three of the perſons qualified as " aforeſaid to be governors, aſſembled at a " meeting to be held for that purpoſe, after " two months notice thereof given in the public " news-papers circulated in that county, and " ſigned by at leaſt fifteen perſons ſo qualified.

Remark.] If the preceding reſolutions be ſubſtantiated by ſuch facts, and ſupported by ſuch proofs as to induce the wiſdom of parliament to form them into a law, why ſhould this law be ſubject to a partial operation? Why not univerſally take place?

" RESOLUTION 27. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That the houſes to be provided " for the general reception of the poor ought to " be limited by the act, ſo as not to exceed a " certain number for each reſpective county, " or the number for each county ſhould be aſ- " certained by the act; and that the governors

" ſhould

" ſhould have power to borrow money upon
" the credit of the poor's rates, for providing
" and furniſhing the neceſſary buildings, and
" and alſo for buying a convenient ſtock of ma-
" terials and utenſils for employing the poor.

Remark.] When it is left to the direction of two parts in three of the perſons qualified as governours, whether the law ſhall be executed or not; it may with equal reaſon, be ſubmitted to them, to proportion the number of the county workhouſes, for how can theſe be properly limited, previous to the paſſing of the act?---A full power certainly ſhould be given to the governours to borrow money, where an enormous ſum will be wanting; and as the ſucceſs of the ſcheme may be very doubtful, very ſtrong ſecurity ſhould be provided for the lenders.

" RESOLUTION 28. That it is the opinion of this
" Committee, That all cities and towns which
" are counties of themſelves, ſhould be conſi-
" dered as diſtinct counties; but the qualifica-
" tion of their governors ſhould be leſs than
" thoſe required in the counties at large.

Remark.] The propriety of this reſolution is evident enough.

" RESOLUTION 29. That it is the opinion of this
" Committee, That every perſon qualified to
" act as a governor, ought to ſend his name
" and place of abode to the clerk of the diſtrict
" wherein he reſides, at the firſt and every an-

" nual

" nual meeting of the governors for that dif-
" trict, or for every neglect to forfeit a ſum of
" money; and that the clerk at every ſuch
" meeting ſhall produce a liſt, containing the
" names and places of abode of the governors
" ſo tranſmitted to him; which he ſhall divide
" into twelve equal parts, as near as may be,
" and the fractional parts ſhall be diſtributed,
" by adding one to each month as far as they
" will extend, beginning with the month of
" January, and proceeding to each ſucceeding
" month: that the name of every ſuch gover-
" nor ſhall be wrote upon a ſmall piece of pa-
" per, and put into a glaſs or box; from whence
" the clerk, or ſome governor preſent, ſhall
" draw ſo many names as under ſuch regulation
" ſhall belong to the month of January, and
" in like manner for each ſucceeding month;
" and the names ſo drawn ſhall be entered by
" the clerk in a book to be provided for that
" purpoſe; but liberty ſhould be given for
" one governor to exchange his month with
" another, upon notifying the ſame to the
" clerk, and having an entry made thereof in
" the ſaid book, one week at leaſt before the
" monthly meeting; and that every governor
" ſo drawn or exchanged, ſhall either attend
" ſuch monthly meeting of the governors, or
" forfeit a ſum of money; but in caſe any go-
" vernor, from ſickneſs or any other unavoid-
" able cauſe, to be allowed by the governors
" at ſuch monthly meeting, ſhall be unable to
" attend, and ſhall procure another governor
" to attend in his place, he ſhall be excuſed
" ſuch penalty.

Re-

Remark.] Unleſs a number of gentlemen will take up a fixed reſolution of attending the meetings regularly, (and they muſt be willing for ſome time at leaſt, to devote the labour of a week in every month to the buſineſs) this eſtabliſhment cannot be upheld as it ought to be; for from an *obligation* upon gentlemen to do their duty, under a penalty, or by a proxy, the buſineſs will be found to be imperfectly hurried over.

" Resolution 30. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That the act, paſſed in the ſe- " venteenth year of the reign of his late Ma- " jeſty King George the Second, intituled, " An " Act to amend and make more effectual the " Laws relating to Rogues, Vagabonds, and " other idle and diſorderly Perſons, and to " Houſes of Correction," ſhould be explained " and amended by a ſeparate act, in ſuch man- " ner as will be moſt likely to enforce the exe- " cution thereof, and prevent the practice of " begging in the ſtreets and highways, perni- " cious in its conſequences, and highly diſ- " graceful to this country; which practice will " be without the leaſt excuſe when theſe regu- " lations take place, by which the diſtreſſes of " the poor will upon all occaſions be ſpeedily " and comfortably relieved; and the amend- " ments ſhould alſo be ſo adapted, as to pre- " vent impoſitions and abuſes upon the public " in the apprehending and paſſing of vagrants.

Remark.] The vagrant act hath now ſubſiſted upwards of thirty years, yet every propoſal

propoſal of explaining and amending this; and indeed any other law, ſhould have its due weight: but it is not ſuggeſted by the committee what the explanations or amendments are meant to be. It ſeems to ariſe from the want of vigour in the execution of the law, that the practice of begging hath not been long ſince repreſſed. For every ſubject is ſo far armed with the authority of a peace officer, that he can without any warrant, apprehend and deliver to a magiſtrate, vagrants of every denomination.

But whilſt perſons are found either to be influenced by good motives, or prevailed upon by importunity, to extend their relief, beggars will be always found. Beſides, there are ſuch numbers of diſcharged ſoldiers and ſea-faring men, Iriſh and Scotch, and others whoſe ſettlements cannot be eaſily diſcovered, as alſo the wives, and children of ſuch; there are many too who being lawfully drawn from their homes, have the misfortune to fall into want, or ſickneſs; theſe or moſt of theſe, muſt of courſe be paſſed away as vagrants; county workhouſes cannot be meant for their reception. It is chiefly from the apprehenſion and conveyance of vagrants of this ſort, that ſo much money is annually ſpent in every county, and which is not likely in any great degree to be prevented.

" RESOLUTION 31. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That proper houſes of correction " ſhould be provided at the houſes for the ge- " neral reception of the poor in every diſtrict, " for the more convenient inſpection of the go- " vernors; but ſo ſeparated from the other " buildings as to prevent any improper com- " munication therewith; and that ſuch rules, " orders, and regulations, ſhould be eſtabliſh- " ed within thoſe houſes of correction, as may " make them effectual for the purpoſes for " which they were intended by the ſeveral laws " now in being.

Remark.] As there are in moſt parts of England, *Bridewells and Houſes of Correction* already erected, and which muſt continue for the ſecurity of perſons charged with felony, breaches of the peace, miſdemeanours, &c. what neceſſity will there be for other priſons as appendages to the general workhouſes? Theſe very workhouſes alone will be found to create a general diſguſt and inquietude amongſt the lower claſs of the people: but their ſuſpicions will certainly be heightened, when it is found that *Houſes of Correction* are to be annexed as a neceſſary part of the new eſtabliſhment; will they not be ready to conclude that the æra of ſlavery is at hand?

" RESOLUTION 32. That it is the opinion of this " Committee, That the ſeveral returns directed " by the order of the houſe of the eleventh day " of

" of April laſt, to be made by the maſters,
" governors, and officers, having the care
" and direction of the ſeveral houſes of
" induſtry, or public workhouſes, eſtabliſhed
" by acts of parliament ſpecially made for
" the relief and employment of the poor
" within that part of Great Britain called
" England; and by the clerks of the peace,
" town clerks, and treaſurers, within the ſe-
" veral counties, ridings, diviſions, liberties,
" precincts, cities, and towns corporate, with-
" in that part of Great Britain called England;
" and the certificates of the juſtices of the
" peace; ſhould be made according to the forms
" hereunto annexed, marked [F] and [G]."

Remark.] It is ſuppoſed that this Reſolution hath been fully complied with, and that the members of the houſe, and particularly thoſe who are foremoſt in promoting the new law,* are in full poſſeſſion of every information relative to the ſubject: however, an eſtimate is here ſubjoined of the expences that are ſuppoſed to attend a ſingle publick workhouſe. But this eſtimate is not ſet up, as being ſo exact as it ought to be; it perhaps doth not rate every thing at the greateſt extent, nor may every minute article be poſſibly brought into the account.

* And here it would be diſreſpectful not to obſerve, that the publick is under the higheſt obligations to one Gentleman, Mr. GILBERT, Member of Parliament for *Litchfield*, for his conſtant aſſiduity in promoting every law that may be of general ſervice; and who is at this time earneſt in his wiſhes to render the poor laws as extenſively uſeful as it is poſſible.

	£.	S.	D.
The expence of buying ground and building a workhouſe to contain 600 grown-up perſons of both ſexes, and 100 children, with an infirmary, houſe of correction, and every other neceſſary convenience, with the furniture of the whole, may be eſtimated at the ſum of 8,000l. which at 5l. per cent. per annum, will be	400	0	0
Maſter & Matron, boarding included - - -	100	0	0
Chaplain - - - - - -	50	0	0
Clerks, Treaſurer, School-Maſter and Miſtreſs, and neceſſary Servants, not being paupers - -	135	0	0
Annual expences in replacing and repairing beds, coverlets, blankets, &c. reckoned at 350 beds	35	0	0
Alſo annual repairs of buildings, furniture, utenſils, &c. - - -	35	0	0
Surgeon, Apothecary and drugs, &c. - - -	180	0	0
Funerals, and occaſional child births, rated at	20	0	0
	£ 955	0	0

N. B. Of the objects that theſe houſes will neceſſarily contain, there muſt be great numbers conſtantly ſick and diſeaſed: and as vagrants will be ſo frequently ſent there, who are rarely free from ſome complaint or other; nay further, as it is by theſe that the ſeeds of the petechial fever are generally carried into, or kept alive in our priſons, no certain rate can be made of the expences of apothecaries, &c.---it will certainly be a very heavy article.

An Eſtimate of Cloathing, &c. One Man, for a Year.

	£.	S.	D.
Cloth and trimming for coat, waiſtcoat and breeches, and hat -	0	11	4
Two ſhirts, and thread -	0	5	2
Two pair of ſtockings, 2s. 4d. two handkerchiefs, 1s. 3d. - - - - -	0	3	7
Shoes and ſoaling - -	0	6	0
Waſhing, at one farthing per week, or one ſhilling per year - - - - -	0	1	0
	1	7	1

An Eſtimate of Cloathing, &c. One Woman, for a Year.

Four caps, 1s. 1d. two handkerchiefs, 1s. 3d. two ſhifts & thread, 5s.	0	7	4

	£.	S.	D.
A pair of ſtays or boddice, at 5s. each, one to ſerve three years, in one year is	0 :	1 :	8
Two aprons, 1s. 6d. two pair of ſtockings, 2s. 4d	0 :	3 :	10
Shoes and ſoaling - -	0 :	3 :	8
Two petticoats, 5 one-half yards, at 1s 3d per yard	0 :	6 :	10
Short gown or jacket -	0 :	3 :	9
Waſhing, at one farthing per week, or one ſhilling per year - - - - -	0 :	1 :	0
	1 :	8 :	1

N. B. The above materials, eſpecially of the aprons and gowns, are ſtated to be of the coarſeſt ſtuff, and to be made as ſcanty as poſſible, but to be decent on a Sunday at leaſt, there may be a difference of a few ſhillings for each woman annually.

Rent of houſe, repairs, ſervants, &c. - - - -	955 :	0 :	0
Cloathing of 600 grown up perſons, reckoned at an average at 1l. 7s each per annum - - -	810 :	0 :	0
Keeping 600 perſons at 2s 4d per week, or rated at 6l. a year each -	3600 :	0 :	0
100 children keeping cloathing, &c. at 3l. 15s. per year - -	375 :	0 :	0
£	5740 :	0 :	0

No notice being taken in the preceding eſtimate of the earnings of the ſeveral paupers, it may be obſerved, that the prime coſt of the materials for cloaths, ſhoes, &c. are only reckoned; perhaps there may generally be paupers to make them up. As to any profit from a cloth or linen manufactory, to be carried on in the houſe, very little can be expected: labour of all kinds is at a low rate; the expences of tools and materials, of taking in, giving out, and ſuperintending the work, will be very great, but moſt of all, the work in theſe places being imperfectly finiſhed, will ſeldom prove a ſaleable commodity: for theſe and other reaſons, except in the trifling article of ſpinning, and that only in ſome ſituations, no advantage can well ariſe from the labour of theſe paupers; perhaps indeed they may be occaſionally employed upon the roads, or as labourers elſewhere; and yet many great inconveniences will be found to attend this permiſſion of going to work out of the houſe.

The women who are healthful, being likely to find full employment in managing the different houſehold buſineſſes, in brewing, baking, and making the beds, in attending young children, in making and mending the cloaths of the family, and moſt of all, in waiting upon the ſick and diſabled, very little value can be ſet upon their earnings.

But if it is ſtill contended, that the labour of the paupers *may* produce conſiderable profit; it will appear that no charge is here rated for conveying paupers to and from the houſes; for reinſtating ſuch in their own pariſhes, who may be thought to be able to provide for themſelves, by quitting the houſe: Nothing is reckoned for apprentice-fees with the children, or cloathing them afreſh when they are ſo apprenticed. Beſides, it muſt be an additional charge to pariſhes, from their officers being obliged ſo frequently to attend the houſe, the juſtices, the ſeſſions, &c. nor can it be aſſerted that the new law will totally cut of all litigation about ſettlements, or prevent baſtardy, which often draws a great expence upon pariſhes, in bringing the parties to juſtice, and defending appeals.

As to the maintenance of the *caſual poor*, it hath been found in many places, and at particular ſeaſons, to amount to as great a ſum as was expended upon the poor in a parochial workhouſe.

OBSER-

OBSERVATIONS

UPON THE

PRINTED BILL.

THE proviſion for the poor, I apprehend, is a matter of *juſtice*, and not of *favour*, and the relief they want can give us no *right* to *impriſon* their perſons; *impriſon* them, did I ſay? the term perhaps may be thought to be a ſtrong one; but it may not be leſs true for being ſo; nay, it is a neceſſary, unavoidable conſequence, of a publick *County-Workhouſe*: The very nature of the inſtitution implies it. Want acts *compulſively* upon the mind; the poor man hath no alternative, a dreadful one at leaſt; for if he doth not become an habitual vagrant, if he hath virtue enough to avoid the perpetration of crimes, it is left to the diſcretion of two perſons, who are ſtyled *Guardians*,* under the propoſed law, to paſs the irrevocable ſentence upon him: The indigent culprit is adjudged to be committed to a *County Workhouſe*, with little hopes of ever being reſtored to the world, and to his freedom! No act

* A power is alſo to be given to theſe *Guardians*, to direct children above four years of age, to be *taken away* from their parents, if they are unable to maintain them, and to be ſent to the County Workhouſe.

of royal grace, will reach an incarcerated pauper.---We all know that the law of this country from the great *Charter of Liberties*, down to the preſent period, * abhors the very idea of laying any unjuſt or unneceſſary reſtraint, upon the perſonal liberty of the ſubject. How then can we reconcile this mode of maintaining the poor, conſiſtent with any notions of ſubſtantial juſtice? But let us hope that it will never be in the power of the moſt ſubtle political caſuiſt, to perſuade us, that old age is *a crime*, and poverty *a breach of the Peace*; let us hope that the time will never come, when the poor ſhall have reaſon to cry out "that the world is "not their friend, nor the world's law."

It is notorious, that whenever an attempt hath been made by virtue of the *preſent* law, of hiring out paupers to be provided for, even in the adjoining pariſhes, it hath anſwered no uſeful purpoſe, but on the contrary hath brought infinite diſquiet upon many individuals. And one may venture to declare, without any pretenſion to a ſpirit of divination, that when the particular day ſhall be announced, in which the doors of a *County Workhouſe* are to be thrown open for the reception of its inhabitants, it will prove, *a day of real diſtreſs*.

Parochial

* To be a ſubject of Great-Britain, with all its conſequences, is to be the freeſt member of any civil ſociety in the known world. V. King's Speech, Oct. 26, 1775.

Parochial Workhouſes, contributing generally to *deter* the poor from aſking for relief, are now become rather receptacles for the ſick and the aged, illegitimate, and deſerted children, diſſolute men, and diſeaſed proſtitutes; and ſometimes indeed, an honeſt and induſtrious family is compelled by extreme neceſſity, to take their abode there. Can it then be ever expected that ſuch as theſe, by being collected in *one great ſeminary*, will become more uſeful to the publick, or leſs miſerable in themſelves? Will coercion and reſtraint tend to ſoften the tempers, and to correct the depravity of the unhappy inmates? Will children,* nurſed and inſtructed in ſuch ſchools as *theſe*, be likely to prove good members of the community? Can it be expected that an houſhold of ſo promiſcuous a croud, ſhould be kept together, without exhibiting continual ſcenes of diſorder, tumult and woe? In this view, indeed, we may allow an *Houſe of Correction*, to be a proper appendage to a family of this ſort; but will a *Rotation-Office* be thought to be leſs neceſſary? For the civil magiſtrate may

* The number of children brought into many pariſh workhouſes, encreaſe ſo much, that it becomes difficult to diſpoſe of them properly as apprentices: In how much greater proportion will they encreaſe in county workhouſes? And ſhould they not be returned to the towns from whence they were removed? In no long ſpace of time there may be a large, and growing ſtock of idiots, crippled and diſeaſed poor. The *Foundling-Hoſpital*, many years ago, furniſhed out a long catalogue of pitiable objects of this ſort.

be likely to find full employment for the exerciſe of his authority, in reſtraining ſo large a body within the bounds of duty. In other inſtances, the propoſed law ſeems calculated to ſink the dignity of the reſpectful office of a *Juſtice of the Peace*, by the introduction of a new and unheard of polity: The rugged and invidious taſk of enforcing an additional, and very heavy penal ſtatute, is to be thrown upon him, in which every gentleman, his friend, or perhaps his neareſt neighbour, may be *immediately* and *perſonally* intereſted. Whilſt on the contrary he can no longer mediate between the neceſſities of the poor, and the rigour of an unrelenting pariſh-officer; deprived of the power of ſhewing himſelf in the amiable light, of being the poor man's *friend*,---he will hereafter, be conſidered only, as an odious officer of the Crown.

How far thoſe *Houſes of Induſtry*, which are ſet up under the authority of a particular law,* may anſwer the ends of their inſtitution, we will not pretend to ſay: Opinions are various; and we can argue only from the conſequences they may be likely to produce in our own country, and eſpecially when they appear to be eſtabliſhed upon a very different plan, and to be conducted by a very different police, than what the preſent bill points out: It

* Such were Sudbury, and Colcheſter—but will their *ſucceſs* be quoted as *precedents*, in ſupport of the preſent Law?

It is ſaid, indeed, that ſervants and others, from a dread of being ſometime likely to be removed to one of theſe houſes, are frequently very earneſt to avoid gaining ſettlements, in the hundreds where they are erected. *

But we may truſt to the good ſenſe of the gentlemen and merchants of *this* country, that they will not haſtily countenance a meaſure, which may at any time raiſe the ſhadow of a pretext for emigration, or which may have the leaſt tendency to drive men from the ſhuttle and the plow.

Charity is the diſtinguiſhing virtue of the times in which we live, it marks the national character, and is exerted in every part of the kingdom, in works of publick munificence, ſuch as *Alms-houſes*, *Infirmaries*, and *Hoſpitals*, of every ſort, ſo fully adapted to the ſeveral wants of the poor, as to render *Publick Workhouſes*, every day leſs neceſſary, if we ſhould allow them to be neceſſary at all. The poor in this county, have the greateſt reaſon to felicitate themſelves, that *Infirmaries* are eſtabliſhed at *York* and *Leeds*,† grounded upon a truly benevolent, and extenſive plan; many inſtances might be produced of deſerving paupers being by theſe noble charities reſtored to all the vigour of health, who otherwiſe might have dragged on

* V. Burrow's Continuation. No. 216.

† An Hoſpital for Lunaticks hath, within theſe very few years, been built at York.

on a miſerable being, and what is moſt material for us to obſerve here, who might have been a heavy burthen to the pariſhes to which they belonged. It is true indeed, that if the law in queſtion, ſhall happen to take place, a new field will be opened, in which the profeſſors of modern architecture, with a *County purſe*, at their command, and under the patronage of ſome diſtinguiſhed projector, may have full ſcope for the diſplay of their invention and taſte, in rearing edifices, to be adapted to ſuch a variety of purpoſes. There muſt be diſtinct apartments, for ſingle men and women, with dining halls, and working ſhops, for each ſex, as alſo ſeparate rooms for married perſons: a ſchool for the children, and a place for divine worſhip: Committee-rooms, and offices for the clerks, with proper repoſitories, for the reception of *all* aſſeſſments, indentures, pay-bills, certificates, orders, &c. &c. *of all the pariſhes*, within the ſeveral diſtricts. ——We have heard already, that there is to be an *Houſe of Correction*; there is alſo to be a *Peſt-houſe*, as it is called, with the very name of which, one cannot help aſſociating a very unpleaſing idea. There muſt be apartments for the maſter, matron, and ſervants, with kitchens, brewhouſes, and every other convenience, within and without the houſe, to accommodate a family of ſeven or

eight

eight hundred perſons. It will alſo be highly neceſſary that the governors ſhould be at the expence of throwing up *a line of circumvallation*, if I may be permitted to call it ſo, for the *Engliſh*, from their inborn love of liberty, will be intent upon every opportunity of regaining it. And as Lords of Manors may be *obliged* to yield up a quantity of common land, for the paupers to cultivate, the purchaſe, and fencing of this, will inflame the reckoning. But the very detail of theſe things, would be thought to be tedious, was it not introduced for the purpoſe of ſhewing, that a *ſingle* workhouſe, raiſed upon the great ſcale, now chalked out, by the bill, with the utenſils, furniture, &c. belonging to it, and from a known eſtimate of the expence of building the *Ackworth Hoſpital*, cannot amount to a leſs ſum than *Sixteen Thouſand Pounds*: yet whenever it happens that there is a ſtoppage in the manufactory of a country, or that we have an uncommon dearneſs of proviſions even for a few months, the number of poor in many parochial workhouſes may come to be doubled. Will it not then be proper that the county workhouſes ſhould be built, upon a *probability* of the increaſe of the paupers to nine hundred or a thouſand ſouls? And if ſo, the expence of an houſe of this ſize, with the intereſt of money borrowed during the finiſhing of it, and every

other

other previous expence, until it ſhall become habitable, will amount to a much greater ſum than what is here ſtated. And, *for this purpoſe*, the property of the inhabitants of every diſtrict, is to be inſtantly *mortgaged*.

Beſides, every man from the firſt in the kingdom, down to the owner of twenty-five, and the farmer of fifty pounds a year, *is liable*, a governor in a particular manner, under a penalty, *is compellable*, to take his ſhare, in executing the new Law. The duty of an honeſt overſeer will be irkſome enough, ſubject as he is to be, to the caprice and controll of ſo many maſters, ſome of them perhaps more ignorant than himſelf. Out of the whole body of governors, a *Committee* is to be choſen to divide the diſtricts, and to fix the places where the buildings are to be erected. There is then to be *another* committee of buildings and rates, *rates*, I ſay, which is a moſt important truſt indeed; a circumſtance to which in a particular manner we ought to advert, for, by its conſequences we may be ſubjected to the *injuſtice* of what is vulgarly called, an *equal taxation*. There is next to be a *Committee of Trade and Manufactures*, *another* for the nomination of the officers, and to fill up vacancies. There is to be an eſtabliſhment for voluntary contributions, to be employed in portioning out men and women (with money and waſte

ground)

ground) who have been *educated* in theſe houſes,—*educated*? The term is very vague, as there is a proviſion in the bill for *apprenticing* children, when arrived to a proper age.—And a *Committee* is to be elected to conduct this charity.

There is alſo to be *another Committee* to inſpect the returns to be made to parliament, and for applying to parliament, when any *amendment* in the law ſhall be found neceſſary. And that an *amendment* muſt be wanting, in a ſhort proceſs of time, there will be little room to doubt, for unleſs there can be found to be a capital error in rating the expences of the buildings, and the yearly maintenance of the families therein, unleſs we can believe that the other extraordinary and incidental charges, which ariſe *out* of the houſes, will be of a trifling amount, we ſhall find there muſt be an immenſe deficiency, ſo that when the preſent laws are abrogated, and gone, and a novel code of legiſlation hath taken place, how is this deficiency to be made up? Muſt we abandon the project, or perſevere in the ſupport of it? In either caſe, and in every light, the proſpect is truly alarming! There is a proviſion for *another Committee*, when a *reduction* of the aſſeſſments may be required; but after what hath been already ſaid, can we flatter ourſelves with the moſt diſtant expectation, that *ſuch a Committee as this*, will ever be

called ? I muſt not forget to mention *another Committee*, a *Committee of Charities*.*--Beſides occaſional meetings, there are to be annual meetings, quarterly meetings, monthly meetings, weekly meetings, and *oftener, if neceſſary*; ſo that governors in one capacity or other, may poſſibly be obliged to attend, every day in the year. This puts one in mind of a ſociety, mentioned by the celebrated Mr *Addiſon*, and called the *Everlaſting Club*, in which there had not been, a *ſede vacante*, in the memory of man.

The bill alſo directs that when the ſettlements of paupers are in another county, they are *firſt* to be carried to the diſtrict workhouſe, (an unneceſſary trouble and expence ſurely this,) and upon complaint of the governor's clerk, to juſtices of the peace, they are to be removed home. Will not then this produce an entire *change* in the ſtated forms of proceedings, and thereby afford new matter for contention ?

It is alſo directed that there ſhall be *no* removals, to or from incorporated places, till the party is *actually chargeable*. Will not this be, *in effect*, a repeal of *all* the laws, relative to the ſubject from 13 and 14 Cha. 2d. to this day ? Beſides, if a pauper is not to be removed till he becomes *chargeable*, that

* It is queſtionable, whether under the limitations in the bill, there will be many diſtricts, which can furniſh a ſufficient number of governors to conduct the buſineſs.

that is, in many caſes till he is *actually ſick*, the purpoſe of a removal will be defeated.

The other clauſe, giving a ſettlement to perſons where they have *reſided twelve months*, ſeems to be an entire abolition of the whole doctrine of ſettlements. A ſervant may be ſettled *without* an hiring, and an apprentice *without* an indenture, an huſband and wife may have different ſettlements; the former may be cooped up in a houſe of induſtry in *Suffolk*, whilſt his wife is ſpinning yarn in a diſtrict workhouſe in *Yorkſhire*. A child that lives to be a year old may be ſettled in *Newcaſtle*, and its parents in *Briſtol*. But whatever confuſion and miſchief theſe clauſes may be ſuppoſed to introduce, they will certainly have this effect, (ſuch is the ſtrange viciſſitude of things!) that the ſeveral volumes containing all the learning upon theſe ſubjects, the ſolemn deciſions of ſome of the greateſt men this nation ever produced, may come to be eſtimated literally, as *waſte paper*, the lumber of a library.

Such are the general outlines, upon which theſe publick corporations are to be formed.* Without entering into a minute examination of their ſeveral ſubordinate parts, which in

 many

* We are told that the propoſed law will be a revival of the *ſpirit and intention of the* good old ſtatute of the 43d of Eliz. but doth not that ſtatute eſpecially provide, that the poor ſhall be maintained, and employed at their *own homes*, and in their *own pariſhes*, by ſubſtantial houſholders, as overſeers, and who are to be under the *immediate direction* of the neighbouring juſtices of the peace?

many reſpects are highly exceptionable, we may be able to judge of the expediency and practicableneſs of the deſign: but beſides it ought to be obſerved, that the *preſent* bill is meant to be only a *part* of the new ſyſtem; that, together with *rules, orders, regulations, &c. another* bill, concerning *idle and diſorderly perſons, vagrants,** *&c.* is now preparing to be offered to the houſe. When we know this, freſh difficulties naturally croud upon the mind, already bewildered with the ſubject!

It would indeed be an happy circumſtance if any means *could* be deviſed, by which honeſt poverty might have every comfortable relief, the idle and vagrant poor kept to labour, and neceſſitous children, formed to early habits of induſtry; but this is one of thoſe moſt intricate, and comprehenſive ſubjects, in which any great degree of perfection is hardly to be hoped for.——We cannot expect to annihilate miſery, or to oblige men to be virtuous,—At preſent we tread upon ſolid ground, we know where we are, and what we are about: Is it then adviſable, in a buſineſs of ſuch national importance, †

to

* *Lord Coke* ſomewhere obſerves, that upon the making of the ſtatute of 39 *Eliz.* and a good ſpace after, whilſt the officers of juſtice, were diligent, and induſtrious, there was not a rogue to be ſeen in any part of *England.*

† The illuſtrious Monteſquieu, very juſtly obſerves, "that to propoſe alterations, belongs only to thoſe who are ſo happy as to be born with a genius capable of penetrating into the entire conſtitution of a ſtate."

to try experiments, the ſucceſs whereof appears very doubtful, and the failure likely to be attended with fatal conſequences? Or rather, would it not be more prudent, and eſpecially at a time, when our publick affairs are in ſo preſſing and ſo uncertain a ſtate, to put up with inconveniences, the extent of which we know, than to run the dangerous riſque of making ſo great a change in the Engliſh conſtitution?

My ſituation for ſeveral years, in a very extenſive and populous diſtrict, having allowed me every opportunity of attending as well to the wants and the diſpoſitions of the poor, * as to the laws by which they are happily governed, I hope to be juſtified in the declaration, that the poor (of this country I would be underſtood to ſpeak) are as well provided for, and as eaſy in themſelves, § as their condition gives them a right to expect: That when we conſider their education, and ordinary courſe of life, they are for the moſt part

* That ignorance which judges by its feelings, is leſs ſubject to error, than the knowledge of the laws which judges by opinion. MARQUISS BECCARIA.

§ This may be attributed to the humanity, or policy of overſeers, and ſuperintendants of workhouſes, who relieve great numbers, as well by a conſtant weekly pay, as by temporary contributions.——The Workhouſe at Leeds is conducted under the immediate direction of a committee of the magiſtrates and the principal perſons of the town, but their benevolence is not confined to the houſe *alone*, it is liberal, it is enlarged; and appears ſtrongly from the great ſums that are expended, in the relief of caſual poverty, and in ſtanding weekly donations: hence it is that many honeſt and induſtrious families, are rendered uſeful to ſociety, and happy, in the free enjoyment of liberty at their *own homes*.

part regular, ſober, and induſtrious; that in thoſe pariſhes where the rates are the higheſt, the inhabitants who contribute to them, appear to be in a thriving ſtate, and very chearfully pay their portion, to the relief of their indigent neighbours. And I can alſo ſafely aver, that I never recollect more than three or four orders of removal, that ſeemed to be at all *vexatious*. And indeed, I have generally found it, to be *more* conducive to the publick, and to their own private good, for labourers, manufacturers, and perſons of inferior life, to abide in the places to which they belong, and where for the moſt part, it is their intereſt, and they have every inducement *to* abide. And I am bold enough to add, as far as my experience, and ſlender abilities will allow me to judge, that I cannot help admiring the laws, relative to the poor of this kingdom, as being the nobleſt, and moſt perfect ſyſtem, in the world.

An

An Eſtimate of the Expences in ſupporting a County Workhouſe.

	£. s. d.
The Cloathing and Keeping of 700 Perſons, Adults and Children, at an average, will amount to 7l. 16s. each a year.--[It appears from the cloſeſt inſpection into the Accounts of ſeveral Workhouſes that the poor cannot be well maintained at any lower price] - - - - - - - - -	5460 : 0 : 0
Houſe Rent, being Intereſt of the principal Sum for Buildings, &c.	800 : 0 : 0
Clerks, Treaſurer, School-maſter and Miſtreſs, and Servants	280 : 0 : 0
Maſter, Matron, Chaplain & Gaoler	160 : 0 : 0
Beds, Coverlets, Blankets, repairs of Furniture, Buildings & Utenſils	70 : 0 : 0
Surgeon and Apothecary - - -	190 : 0 : 0
Funerals and occaſional Child-births	20 : 0 : 0
Carrying Paupers to and from the Workhouſe, and Removals	20 : 0 : 0
£.	7000 : 0 : 0

The number of poor who are allowed weekly pay, *out* of the Workhouſes is very different, in different Pariſhes, amounting in ſome to twice, or thrice more, than thoſe who are maintained *in* ſuch Houſes: Scotch, Iriſh, Foreign and other Vagrants, whoſe Settlements cannot be found, ſeem to be meant to have a right given them, (and who probably will be ready enough to claim it), of being maintained in a County Workhouſe: can we then find any certain data upon which to reſt a calculation, how *many* perſons in any diſtrict, may be likely to be incorporated under the propoſed law? In a matter of ſuch infinite moment there ought to be no room left for *ſpeculation*.

	£. s. d.
The Paupers in the Workhouſe at Wakefield, conſiſt generally, of about 80 Perſons, whoſe annual average ſupport amounts to about	500 : 0 : 0
The Poor, on the pay liſt, are about 150, and receive at an average, annually - - - - - -	228 : 0 : 0
	728 : 0 : 0
If then the above 150 Perſons, ſhall be *inclined* (for the 80 already in the Workhouſe will be *obliged*) to remove into a County Workhouſe the number from the Town of Wakefield *only*, will be 230, whoſe maintenance, as it is ſtated in the Eſtimate, will amount per ann. to	2300 : 0 : 0
But, if we ſuppoſe that only, *half* of the above number of 150, are willing to be removed and that the remainder will be *content* to be without relief, then the maintenance of 155 will be *only* - -	1550 : 0 : 0

N. B. Nothing is here put down for the ſuppoſed earnings of theſe paupers: nor, on the contrary, can we form the leaſt Conjecture, what will be the amount of the extraordinary Charges in the relief of thoſe who cannot be removed from home, or who are caſually lame, or ſick, or diſtreſſed: Expences in Baſtardy Caſes, and Litigations in other Matters; theſe, and many more Articles, muſt be truſted to the long *Chapter of Accidents*.

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